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THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 5, Number 6 November-December 1981

T-SHIRTS

A new order of our "official" Bi Center T-shirts (like the ones our group wore at the Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade) just arrived at the Center. They carry the Bi Center logo and name, and they come in three styles:

1) red on white, with red trim (standard cut)
2) chocolate-brown on tan (standard cut)
3) chocolate brown on cream (French cut)

We're asking $7.00 per T-shirt. If you want one mailed to you, please specify the size (small, medium, or large) and the style, and add $1.00 to your check to help cover handling and postage.

THE BISEXUAL CENTER

P.O. Box 26227 (415) 929-9299
San Francisco, CA 94126

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this issue:

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A Kinsey What?
by B.R.J.

I had just gotten into Don Clark's Loving Someone Gay. I had theoretically accepted same-sex sexual relationships some years before, and wanted to better understand sexuality in general and some friends in particular.

But all of a sudden I was shocked out of a theoretical interest by seeing myself described in his definition of "gay":

> Being Gay does not mean that I am unable to have satisfying heterosexual relationships but that I am able to have satisfying homosexual relationships...I am able to involve myself emotionally, sensuously, erotically and intellectually with someone of the same gender...I am capable of this range of relating to another male and that I am willing to act on the capability and translate this potential into behavior. (p2-3)

I couldn't put the book down, reading feverishly as I tried to discover more about my feelings and experience. I spent the next few months being really scared and confused -- because I am in a sensitive profession and I am married to a woman to whom I am deeply committed. I couldn't reconcile the experiences of others who were also attracted to the same sex with my continuing enjoyment of my marriage partner and attractions to other women as well.

Yes, Virginia, there are bisexual persons. My fear and confusion arose because I thought (with most of our society) that if one wasn't straight then one was gay or lesbian. In fact, however, sexual orientation is not either-or, straight or gay/lesbian. Sexual orientation is a continuum. (I use "bisexual" to mean one who is attracted erotically to some degree to either or both sexes.)

I have come into an understanding and appreciation of my bisexual orientation through a gradual process. I had the common pre-puberty same-sex experiences, and I found them enjoyable but very guilt-ridden. We moved as I was entering puberty, and I decided then it was too risky for me to try to develop another sexual relationship with another boy -- my dad was a minister, and it was a small town. So I masturbated a lot (again, with great guilt) and dated sporadically.

College was a time of discovery of myself and exploring a new-found freedom. I had a couple of rewarding relationships with women (and married one of them -- we just celebrated ten years!). Graduate school was a very heady time, but I did study and write about sexuality (sometimes to the discomfort of my classmates).

Two events brought me to a place of enough openness for Clark's book to confront me. I had a painful experience with a sexuality seminar that started a long process of self-examination, and a gay person came out to me and wanted help. The process of reflection about myself and helping another deal with himself led me to realize and now affirm my same-sex feelings.

I have been active in the church all my life -- Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, University Christian Movement -- and it is the church which has caused me to confront myself honestly and which has provided the faith resources to support me in my journey. It is also the church's homophobia which made that journey such a lonely and frightening one, and which now keeps me from witnessing personally about the most profound experience of God's love and acceptance I have had.

Bisexuality brings the same fears, threats, and uncertainty about coming out to friends that exclusively gay people experience. I also experience the same problems of finding same-sex partners, particularly ones that share my faith and values.

My journey has put my marriage partner under great strain as I shared every step of growth and fear with her, and as I have decided I needed to act on my desires. Her depth of understanding and capacity for growth have provided stability through this period, and helped me to trust myself more. This has also strengthened her in her own sexual growth journey.

There are some unique things I experience as a bisexual person. I find

my orientation puts those I love under additional pressures (time as well as trust), since I am not monogamous. I would like, for instance, to be in two committed life relationships, one with my present female partner and one with a male partner.

I have experienced skepticism and polite tolerance from gay men, some of whom had gone through a period of bisexuality in the process of fully accepting their gay feelings. This has had the effect of increasing feelings of isolation (at least temporarily) when I needed and wanted mutual support and understanding. This has sometimes come across as pressure to "come all the way out of the closet," from those who want to perpetuate the myth of either/or, gay/straight. I have had gays admit, on the other hand, in hushed tones in the company of their gay friends, that they were really bisexual, but didn't want to say it out loud for fear of losing important support.

I find being "in the middle" a common experience, in non-sexual parts of my life as well. I can identify with the oppression of those who have same-sex feelings and behavior; I can understand and enjoy parts of the straight life. I find I cannot identify, though, with the exclusiveness of either group. I am attracted to members of both sexes.

I find flexibility to be a characteristic of my life experience and sometimes wonder what, if any, might be the connection with my sexuality. It is as if the flexibility of my sexual orientation serves as an undergirding and informing experience for other situations. For example, I find it easy to see both or more sides to an issue and to put myself in another's shoes. The ability to empathize, too, I find is of great help in my profession.

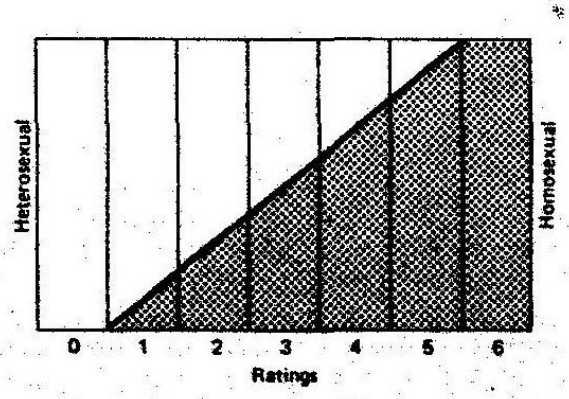
The trouble with society's and the church's preoccupation with non-straight orientations is that sex tends to be overemphasized. Gay and bi people are sometimes thought of as always "getting it on" with someone, as if sexual orientation were somehow the identifying characteristic of our personhood. The reality is that our sexuality holds the same place in our lives that it does in the lives of exclusively heterosexual persons -- from asexual to obsession and all points in between!

I think we could go a long way to restoring balance in our perceptions of the place of sexuality in life if we would be more open to studying and learning about sexuality as it is, including scientific research like that of the Kinsey Institute. I would like to explain how I see the Kinsey continuum of orientation that Kinsey and his associates had to devise to fit the results of their research. They applied it to their research; we can use it to help understand our own sexuality and increase the accuracy of our communication with each other.

Kinsey's research 30 years ago showed that sexual orientation is not either-or, straight-gay/lesbian. His continuum runs from 0-6. Many people know about the scale, which is found in Kinsey's Sexual Behavior in the Human Female. (Bell, in Homosexualities, 1978, uses a 12-point scale in a similar way.)

Kinsey's scale is based on two factors: sexual behavior, and fantasy and attractions ("psychologic reactions"). To place yourself on the scale, examine your own behavior, and your fantasy life and attractions. Rank the factors where you think they lie on the scale and then weigh their relative balance in importance. Sometimes it is easy to say, for example, "I'm a Kinsey 2," when one's behavior, its significance, and one's fantasy life and attractions are fairly well matched. Other times, fantasy and attractions tend more in the direction of one sex and behavior is with the other. This is where the weight becomes important as one defines one's own orientation. Sexual orientation is not an exact thing.

Kinsey drew this diagram to try to illustrate the various proportions of the components as one went from one part of the scale to another:



0 - Exclusively heterosexual with no homosexual component
1 - Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual
2 - Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual
3 - Basically equal heterosexual and homosexual
4 - Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual
5 - Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual
6 - Exclusively homosexual with no heterosexual component

To illustrate, my sexual behavior is predominantly heterosexual; the homosexual experiences I have are relatively few; thus my behavior ranks about a 1. My fantasy and attractions lately have been predominantly homosexual but more than incidentally heterosexual, a 4. In deciding where to place myself on the scale, I take into account the fact that the few homosexual experiences I have had have been carefully chosen, and choose to weight the combined rank closer to 3 than 2 (a new discovery about myself as I have thought about this article).

Another person I know lives in a committed gay relationship and has only homosexual behavior, but fantasy and attractions are incidentally heterosexual. His rank would be a 5, based on his own self-identification.

A third person's behavior is about equally divided between the sexes. His fantasy life is also roughly equal. He ranks himself a 3.

Orientation can move several points over a period of time, too. So, practically speaking, in personal use, Kinsey's scale can be very approximate. And that matches the reality of the experience of persons! We are actuallya unique mix of many factors in our orientation make-up as well as the many other facets we more commonly recognize as unique.

My hope is that we can use this scale (and when appropriate, not use it, and therefore remind ourselves of the wonderfully unique nature of our individual sexual preferences and styles of expression.

My dream is that through dialog with each other, learning about our experiences as unique, created, sexual people of faith, we can celebrate together God's gift of our sexuality. My hope is that this piece, even though it is offered anonymously, might be a part of a conversation that will move us through times of fear and injustice to new occasions to give thanks for God's reconciling love!

(Portions of the above appeared in the Lincoln Gay News, March, 1979)

ADVERTISEMENTS

Below are business cards from some of our members. Reproductions of business cards in the Bi-Monthly are $5.00 per card. Other ads cost $1.00 per line.

Earthtones
Country Home Renovations

Pat Mayo
Mike Caulfield

P.O. Box 88
Sunol, CA 94586
415-862-2058

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RELIABLE AND LOW-COST

AN OPEN LETTER TO NEIL FULLAGAR

September 15, 1981

I am writing in response to your article "Money and Reality" (your reality) which appeared in the Sept./Oct. issue, in which you discuss money issues you perceive the Bisexual Center as facing. I offer here my reactions to your words and speak only for myself.

I agree with you on the issues outlined and especially agree that the Center will be needing more and more money as it expands. I agree that the Center is worthwhile generally speaking, and it has been of critical importance to my own peace of mind, development and enjoyment. My reaction, however, to your article (and also to a related short speech you gave at the end of a Wednesday night rap group in August) is that I am offended by your attitude toward these issues.

I find your attitude in general and several of your specific comments to be damaging to your intentions; I think your efforts to "inspire" people to contribute more money will have a negative effect unless people hear requests in a positive, spirited tone. I am particularly angry at your comment, "There is no simple way of classifying people to tell who is flush and who really has limited means." The Center has always been (in my reality) a friendly, warm, supportive place to feel at home and work on personal growth. It has never had the image (in my mind) of being a bank, which is but one example of an organization which demands proof of income. Are you trying to make people think the Center is becoming a bureaucratic, untrusting institution? If you were the only person I had come in contact with who had asked me to contribute monetarily to the Center, I would have had that feeling. Fortunately, you are not.

Which brings me to a very important point. I have always given more than I was asked to at the Center. I have never asked for thanks (and have never received it, by the way), but instead have felt guilty because "all" I had to give was money!! I don't give three dollars at the rap groups -- I give more. I donated money to the float fund because I was not able to work on it in person. I gave much more than asked to for my annual membership fee. I could go on, but my guilt is already piling up enough to last me for another six months. The reason I am telling you all of this is to make the point that I do give more than asked to, and what I do with the rest of my money (be it spent on movies, dope, or chi-chi shops) is my affair.

And may I add that your time may be more valuable to the Center in the long run if you spend your time and energy thinking of and hosting innovative, profitable fund-raising activities instead of complaining and putting out threatening attitudes of mistrust?

Sincerely,

Charlene Piper

REPLY

One of the points of the original article was that there are limits to the notion of "creating your own reality," unless of course one takes the position that all physical existence is maya, or illusion. So it isn't just a matter of my reality or yours. As the est folks used to point out, gravity doesn't care if you believe in it or not. There really are differences in people's financial situations, and it really does take money to run the Center.

Perhaps I expressed it badly (and I'm sure it didn't help when I pasted up the paragraphs out of order -- in my own article!), but not only do I not want the Bi Center to become a bureaucratic, untrusting institution, I don't think it would work anyway. Clas-

sifications such as "retired," "student," "income under $20,000" don't tell the whole story. People's situations vary so much that only the individual can judge their own appropriate contribution to the Center. I do ask that they be honest and realistic about it, which isn't always easy in a society which mystifies money as ours does.

What you do with the rest of your money is indeed your own affair. In fact, whether to give to the Center is your own (each of our own) affair. I think it contributes to a "friendly, warm, supportive place," when people are honest with themselves and with the rest of the community on this issue.

The impetus for the article was a controversy among the Board and others about money issues. Feelings seemed to range from "The Center is becoming an elitist, upper-middle-class organization and if it can't get its consciousness together on this I don't want to belong," to "If people don't value the Center enough to create the reality where they have enough money, we don't need them." The controversy itself was, in part, stimulated by the observation that the majority of memberships received were reduced rate, when often we were familiar with that individual's much freer spending on other things.

As to money being "all" you had to give, as I mentioned in my article (and I know has been mentioned many times in the rap groups) being at the rap groups and participating is a contribution. And taking the trouble to write your letter was another. (By the way, thanks -- and you're right, it doesn't get said enough.)

Neil Fullagar

MY FRIEND

By Bob N.

June 7, 1981

We talked for hours, he and I
We talked
    of science
    of work
    of friends
    of sex
We both liked sex
    of the usual kind
But
    what of us?
I loved him
    and he liked me.
In concrete terms I said I did
He.....
    looked down...
    and paused.
"It's not that way with me
    I wish it was."
He looked sad
I laughed
    to clear the air
The room resettled
    relieved a moment of its tension
"It doesn't matter,"
    I lied.
"I don't want it if it's not there."
We were silent for two...
    three...
    four...beats
What now?
Could we go back?
Was it too late?
"Suck my cock!" he said.
This doesn't make sense!
It's too abrupt!
It's science, not lust!
I'll kill him!
How dare he trivialize me!

His small hard-rubber cock fit well.
He tasted of the usual salt and musk.
He even tried to penetrate me
    without success.
"It just doesn't turn me on."
    he said.
"It doesn't matter."
    I lied.
The next morning
    we met a willing woman at breakfast.
We took her back to the room
    and made love together
    with her.

BI SOCIETY PAGE

SPRING GARDEN & YARD SALE

I am seeking a few energetic persons who would be interested in creating a Spring Garden & Yard Sale with me to commence in either April or May 1982. My idea would be to have fun and to contribute the profits to the Bi Center's general fund.

San Francisco is known for its unique yard, garage, and junk sales in the Springtime. With some planning, I think a nice day in my garden would be an elegant time for those participating and a profitable time for the Bi Center.

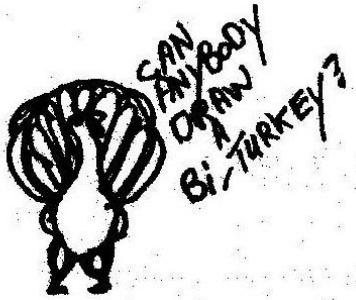
Please call David Strachan at (415) 861-4045 if you are interested in creating this event.

THANKSGIVING DAY DINNER

POT LUCK

Join us at our 2nd Annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner Pot Luck. We will supply the turkey and egg nog, you bring your favorite Thanksgiving Day dish.

Date: Thursday, Nov. 26
Time: 4 P.M.
Place: Bi Center
Donation: $5.00



WINE AND CHEESE NIGHT

Bring your favorite wine or cheese and join us for a relaxing night of meeting old friends and making new ones. For members only.

Date: Friday, December 4
Time: 8 P.M.
Place: Bi Center

DECK THE HALLS

On Saturday, December 19, at 9:00 PM, the Bi Center will have its Annual Christmas Party. Bring holly for the hall, mistletoe for the doorways, or an ornament for the Christmas Tree, and we'll decorate the Center. Also, please bring a small present, costing about $5.00, and suitable for a man or a woman, for an exchange of gifts. This night, no financial donation will be requested.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Last year's New Year's Eve party was another tremendous success, and this year's party will be even better! Help us bring in 1982! Bring your friends, and we'll party all night! B.Y.O.B., of course, and we'll ask for the usual donation to help keep the Bi Center going:

$5.00 for members
$8.00 for non-members and guests.
Party starts at 9:00 PM!

PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW

An exhibit of color and black-and white photographs by Tom Talo will be presented at the Bi Center during November and December. Those who have seen Tom's exquisite photographic studies on display at the Center in the past year will be excited to see the new directions he is moving in.

Groups & Workshops

I WANT TO BE CLOSE--
WAIT! NOT THAT CLOSE!

INTIMACY WORKSHOP FOR MEN AND WOMEN

A one-day workshop to explore ways of sharing intimately with others and to examine the risks and rewards involved in this process. We will examine the ways we set limits--and the ways we can push beyond those limits--in our intimate communications on both emotional and sexual levels. The workshop includes both verbal and non-verbal sharing in dyads and small groups.

Led by David Lourea and Marilyn King.
Date: Saturday, December 5
Time: 10:00 AM--6:00 PM
Place: The Bi Center
Cost: $30.00 for members of the Bi Center
$35.00 for non-members.

Preregistration is essential. To preregister, send a check to Marilyn King, c/o The Bi Center, P.O. Box 26227, San Francisco, CA 94126. Deadline for preregistration is November 28. For more information, call David or Marilyn at the Bi Center, (415) 929-9299.

BI CENTER DANCE TROUPE

The Dance Troupe is dancin'! And it's not too late to join. No experience is necessary. If you are in good physical condition and like to move your body, check us out. It's jazz dancing, like in show business, under the able direction of Gerard, who danced for two years in the London production of "Evita."

We meet Fridays from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. The first hour we do warm-up exercises to music and the second hour we learn steps and moves. In October we met at Fort Mason Center, but in November we will probably move to a different place. So, if you're interested, call Karl at 841-4042 or see him at the Wednesday night rap for the location. It costs $3 a session.

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY NIGHT RAP GROUPS

The Bi Center has drop-in rap groups open to interested people on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, 7:30 to 10:00 P.M. Please be on time. We ask for a $3.00 donation to help support the work of the center.

WOMEN'S RAP GROUP

The ongoing Women's Group. which meets the first and third Mondays of the month, has been very well attended. We continue to grow, and had a pot luck last month that was enjoyed by all!

BI CENTER MOTORCYLE RIDE

By jdc

Gliding around the curves through redwood forests, rolling golden California hills, pumpkin fields and up the misty coast road was a real treat for me. Particularly special was riding with three bikes ahead, seeing three bike's headlights in my mirrors -- and knowing that the riders are my friends, and my community. Thanks -- and let's do it again!

FLASH!! We are doing it again! We'll meet at 10 a.m., November 15, at the Department of Motor Vehicles parking lot at Fell and Baker Streets in San Francisco. Call Bill at 431-2942 for more information.

Community Bulletin Board

NEWSLETTER

Here's the schedule for the next Bi-Monthly:

Layout: Sunday, December 20
Pasteup: Sunday, December 27

All contributions must be in by the start of Layout day, to be considered for the next issue of the newsletter.

We need your help in typing, cutting and pasting, and other jobs, especially on Pasteup day. Why not drop by and help out for an hour or two? No experience required.

FANTASIES BY MAIL

Many Bisexual Center members are familiar with Stan Dale or have taken one of his workshops. Stan recently sent the Center a copy of his book Fantasies Can Set You Free, with a note that "Chapter 7 was written with all of us in mind."

Stan has made a special offer for Bi Center members. If you would like a copy of Fantasies Can Set You Free, send him $7.00 (the cover price) and he will send you the book and the Center $1.50. And tell him who the book is for because he has generously offered to autograph them, too. The address is:

Stan Dale
719 North Dutton Avenue
Santa Rosa, California 95401

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Two of our members have left the Bay Area for post-graduate studies in Southern California. Good luck, Seth and Dave -- we'll be thinking of you.

BOARD MEETINGS

The next two Board Meetings will be held on Monday, November 9, and Monday, December 14, both at 7:30 P.M., at the Bi Center. Board Meetings are open to Bi Center members, and members who have ideas to contribute are invited to attend.

SPECIAL THANKS

- To Karl Anderson, for helping organize our Board Meetings to make them run more smoothly and more productively, and to Joanne and Ray for acting as "Recorders" during the first two meetings under the new format

- To Karl, Bill, and John, for their help in publicizing the Tuesday and Wednesday night rap groups

- To Neil and J.T. for working as "live" telephone answerers at the Center

- To Neil for tracking down all the newsletter items for this issue

- To Sandy and Susan for helping out at the door during the Anniversary Party

- To Gerard, for making the French potluck party a smashing success

- To Bary, for keeping the Center open during his art exhibit

- To Oliver, for donating those hot photos of the Midsummer Night's Dream party

- To Alex, Arlene, and Grant for covering the rap groups during Dave's absence.

BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR 1981

NOVEMBER

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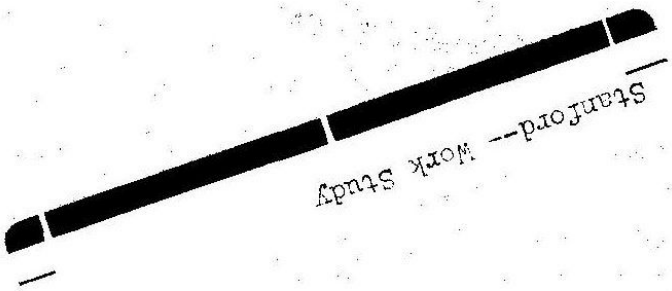
6	7 ♀ Group	8 ↓	9 ↓	10	11	12
13	14 Board Meeting (p.10)	15 ↓	16 ↓	17	18	19 Christmas Party (p.8)
20 Layout (p.10)	21 ♀ Group	22 ↓	23 ↓	24	25	26
27 Pasteup (p.10)	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve party (p.8)		



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